

[Chapter 2]

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Subject: Living Lore New Hampshire

Chapter 2

The next day on the way to the Kendall's Katherine stops to buy needed groceries. Mr. Kendall had given her some money and instructed her to "See that there is plenty of food in the house." She knew what he ate for breakfast and what he liked for supper. "He want all time in the house ,oranges, grapefruit, tomato juice in can, eggs, that foony bacon like ham, crackers for milk, soup in can, coffee and doughnuts." At this last item she wrinkles her face in distaste. "So fat, so heavy," she thinks. Katherine is a careful buyer, the fruit will have to be fresh and tree-ripened. "So much money, must be right. No pay [money?] for no good food." She feels pleasantly wicked in buying food stuffs prohibitive to her purse. With an air of dignity and satisfaction she buys the supplies. Handing her the bag the clerk inquires, "Have you one of our calendars?" "No," she replied. "Would you like one?" "Please." He places the rolled calendar in the bag and Katherine starts happily along.

Taking the key from its hiding,place she lets herself into the apartment. She notices the usual disorder of papers and ashes. Socks, shirt, underwear and towels are just where they have dropped. The sink is piled with dishes but all neatly stacked. "His mother, she make heem. Always she say-'If you help, do it right.' He good man but man." Darting about with her quick motions she soon has the place in order. She opens the refrigerator door

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and stands admiring the neat arrangement of the food. Nodding her head at the plentiful supply, she closes the door but before removing her hand opens it once more. She hopes some day to catch the tiny light in the act of going on.

Now for the ironing. [?] Arranging the ironing board and clothes to her satisfaction and connecting the iron she remembers she hasn't looked as yet at her calendar. Relaxing in a chair, it is soon unrolled and there she sees a picture of a beautiful ship on a choppy sea with a cloud flecked sky above. Immediately she thinks of her trip from Poland [?] twenty-two years ago. Katherine has not seen a ship nor the ocean since. Once more she is on board ship, once more she feels the breeze blowing the clothes about her body and leaving its dampness on her face. She liked it way up top. Again and again she had managed to sneak to the hurricane deck. She looked up--sky, she looked down--water, everywhere nothing but sky and water. She had not quite expected to see so much water and sky for such a long time, eight whole days. If lucky while there she would have time to take her pillow from her bundle, get out her big loaf of Polish bread and hunk of hard, very hard cheese. How good it tasted! Once she had had time to unwrap the [t?] three quarts of whiskey she was bringing. Never would she dare do this below where everyone watched [?] all the time. Not for her was this whiskey. Hadn't she promised in church not to drink until she [?] was twenty-one? No, this is a present to her cousin in America, in Manchester, New Hampshire.

Katherine starts to iron. Never for long could she rest, as never for long could she stay on top the ship. She remembers, "Ship-man come along, scare me away, [say,?] 'Go home, go down, go where you belong' " Then she would [?] go down / and hear the Jewish women go 'I-aye, I-aye', all the time make noise, all time spew all over the place, no can / eat." Then too she would [?] go down to that black-eyed Lithuanian who was always asking her to dance. She remembers him well, "' Come dance little one. ' He all time say 'little one'. He all time [want?] to make foolishness. Me no understand Lithuanian, me no dance, me no make foolishness. He all time buy beer. Me no buy beer, me afraid-not too

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much money. Me buy ship-card, me buy everything to Manchester. At Liverpool say, "Five dollars". Me no understand, me buy everything to Manchester.

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Yes, me geeve, me geeve five dollars. No, no buy beer, me 'fraid, me 'fraid no Manchester. After long time, brudder get back. Everything alright." Katherine rubs her chest and an expression of pain crosses her face. How hard she had worked to get the money for her ticket to America!

Well she re-calls the day of her decision. They had just received a letter from Thaddeus, her cousin in America. He had married, he had a good job, plenty to eat, he and his wife were living together in a room alone and all their own, they could be glad. Then Katherine exclaimed to her mother, "I am going to America!" Her mother retorted, "Find the money!" There was no work for Katherine in Poland, but she heard there was work in Germany. She again rubs her chest and arms in remembrance. "All day long me work in garden. Everywhere beets and cabbages, beets ind cabbages. Me carry stones to road, beeg stones. All stones carry to road, make good road. Me pitch wheat, high ver' high, man stand above me, me pitch beeg bundles of wheat. Too much, too young, just fifteen year. Me lay in bed one week. Man say, 'Too young, come back next year.' Me no go back, me work for woman in house scrub, clean, wash clothes. Me come to America!"

But first she lands in Liverpool. For four long days they waited in Liverpool. It was hard staying there, she was lonesome. Just walk around a little bit and wait; eat a little, walk a little, wait. One day she met the Lithuanian, he pestered her and fiercely she slapped his face and ran into the house. At last they sail and the day comes when she lands in Boston. She feels ill and confused. So different this walking on the earth. So many people all dressed alike, all look alike and all saying the same talk. No mixture of languages here, she the 4 only one different. Whenever spoken to she says, "Manchester." Now comes the last of her long journey, she is on the train to Manchester, Nw Hampshire! Katherine clutches her big bundle, she feels the hard bottles of whiskey against her leg and thinks,

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"Thaddeus will be pleased." Her heart skips a beat. Suppose Thaddeus is no longer in Manchester? Suppose he is dead? Only for a moment is she dismayed. She shrugs, "No matter." She is strong, she will find work, plenty of work in America.

The train pulls into the station and she looks about for a Pole. No Polish costume does she see. In a minute she is being hugged and kissed by people speaking Polish but somehow not looking Polish at all! They laugh and tease her about her old country clothes. Next day nothing would do, but she discard her clothes, her full skirts and petticoats, her brightly colored kerchiefs and embroidered jackets and don American clothes. She feels undressed and naked in so few clothes. They laugh when she hides from her cousin Thaddeus and say she must be American. With some misgivings but with great bravado and faith she packs her old country things and the cousins send them back to her sister in Poland. Only her yellow stockings and high black shoes do they allow her to keep. Katherine once more knows how good it is to eat and is glad not to hear the big noises of the ocean and the Jewish women. In a few days Thaddeus takes her to the mill and she is given a job at a loom. She watches for broken threads in the warp and woof. She is glad she can see so well and ready to burst with pride. "Me, me have job in America. Me smart, me alright, me glad!"

"Long time ago, ver' long time," Katherine smiles tolerantly at that girl and expertly continues her ironing.